San Diego City Attorney
CASEY GWINN

SHERMAN HEIGHTS LANDLORD ORDERED TO CLEAN UP SUBSTANDARD PROPERTIES OR RISK GOING TO JAIL

San Diego, CA (April 27, 2001) — Renters in San Diego do not deserve to live in substandard housing. That's the message a San Diego Superior Court judge sent to landlords in San Diego today. Judge J. Richard Haden ordered a Sherman Heights landlord to correct multiple housing violations at his rental properties, or risk going to jail.

The San Diego City Attorney's Code Enforcement Unit filed a civil case against Elbert Riley, the owner of several rental properties in Sherman Heights, alleging over 25 building and housing violations. The City of San Diego's Neighborhood Code Compliance inspectors issued violation notices to Riley, after finding numerous substandard housing conditions at the rental properties. The violations presently include leaking roofs, sagging ceilings, holes in floors and walls, exposed electrical wiring, inoperable heating units, inoperable plumbing fixtures, and unpermitted structural modifications. Riley failed to comply with state and local building and housing codes, so the City Attorney's Code Enforcement Unit filed this action.

Today, Judge Haden ordered Riley to hire a licensed contractor and to promptly correct the violations at three of his rental properties.

"We believe strongly that everyone in San Diego deserves to live in a safe, habitable environment," City Attorney Casey Gwinn said. "This particular landlord failed to comply with any of the warnings. Rather than repair a plugged up toilet and bathroom sink, he just nailed a large piece of plywood over the entrance to the bathroom, denying the tenants any access. That's unacceptable. That's when the City's Code Compliance inspectors and Code Enforcement prosecutors stepped in."

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